

Exhibit No. 5STATE TRIBAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION Date 3-19-09

STATE OF MONTANA

Bill No. HB 158

P.O. BOX 200505
HELENA, MT 59620



TELEPHONE: 406-841-2775
FAX: 406-841-2731

March 19, 2009

The Honorable Keith Bales
Chairman
Senate Finance and Claims Committee
Montana Senate
PO Box 200500
Helena MT 59620-0500

RE: House Bill 158 Tribal Eligibility for All Grants and Loans under the Big Sky
Economic Development Program

Chairman Bales and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the State Tribal Economic Development Commission, please accept this letter of support for House Bill 158 which provides for the direct access of tribal governments to the Big Sky Trust Fund Category II Planning funds. It is our belief that this legislation will increase overall tribal access to the state of Montana's finance programs and will allow tribes to utilize the planning mechanism of the Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund more effectively.

Thank you for your consideration of the State Tribal Economic Development Commission's testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shawn Real Bird".

Shawn Real Bird
Chairman
State Tribal Economic Development Commission

SRB/hsg

CC: Senate Finance and Claims Committee
State Tribal Economic Development Commission members
Montana Department of Commerce Director Anthony J. Preite